



UEL Research & Knowledge Exchange Conference 2013

Call for Abstracts

Name & Title of Presenter:	Anna Robinson
School:	ADI
Co investigators:	
Title of Abstract:	Joined up musing: Thoughts on being a poet in the community and academy
Key Theme/ Key words:	Poetry, community arts, creating links

Abstract (No more than 400 words):

Since 2006, I have had a number of residencies that have involved me working as a poet in my local area. Much of the work I have done has fed into the thinking behind aspects of my phd research around poetry as a vehicle for micro-history.

From Mistress Quickly to Lil, Eliot's 'tarnished Venus', within the western literary cannon, the voices of working class London women are fairly rare, and when they are present they are there for either comedic value or to stand in for coarseness or both. As a lyric poet from a working class London background, I needed to challenge that narrow archetype and stretch that voice in a way that convinces a reader. My residencies have helped me with that in a number of ways.

The residences and people within the community who have participated in those projects have helped me listen more closely to the voice of my community peer group, play with colloquial phrases (Slanguage), think about and discuss issues of voice, dialect and idealect. In that way, my life as a community poet has fed directly into my life as an academic poet. I am also interested in looking at ways in which my community can be enriched by the academy.

In 2011, UEL hosted a one day conference for public library reading groups as part of the East London Libraries Festival. Due to a change in senior management between the conference being agreed and taking place, there were a number of problems – to start with it was much smaller than it could have been. However, the fact remains that some 40+ people attended – a mixture of academic staff, students and library members from East

London boroughs. The debate was lively and diverse. I would like to see more ways of partnering local libraries and community arts projects being developed.